

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 MC-02 ACDA-05 DPW-01 EB-07

OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 OIC-02 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-07

NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 ERDA-05

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FROM ICRC USDEL

E. P. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, ICRC

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS AT ICRC CONFERENCE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

1. WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2 WAS DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO DISCUSSION OF INCENDIARY WEAPONS. ONLY EXCEPTIONS WERE FEBRUARY 4 PLENARY ON LANDMINES AND BOOBY TRAPS AND FEBRUARY 6 INITIAL MEETING OF LEGAL SUBGROUP TO CONSIDER LEGAL ISSUES COMMON TO ALL CATEGORIES OF WEAPONS. GENERAL WORKING GROUP WILL SWITCH TO SUBJECT OF LANDMINES ON FEBRUARY 9, BUT POSSIBILITY EXISTS TO REVERT TO INCENDIARIES SHOULD IT SEEM DESIRABLE TO DO SO.

2. DEBATE WAS MORE ARGUMENTATIVE AND LESS FACTUAL THAN AT 1974 LUCERNE CONFERENCE. POSITIONS IN GENERAL HAVE CHANGED LITTLE SINCE THEN, AND LITTLE NEW EVIDENCE
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WAS PRESENTED.. VALIDITY OF EVIDENCE IS ILLUSTRATED Y

FACT THAT NONE OF THE MEDICAL "EXPERTS" WHO DECRISED THE HORRORS OF INCENDIARIES APPEAR EVER TO HAVE TREATED ANY BURN CASES. US EXPERTS PRESENTED THEIR VIEWS IN DETAIL AND WERE SUPPORTED TO GREATER OR LESSER DEGREE BY MOST OF WEST. CANADIAN EXPERTS WERE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. THOSE, LIKE BRITISH, WHO DO NOT, RPT NOT, SHARE OUR VISS ON UTILITY OF INCENDIARIES, WERE DISCRETELY QUIET. DUTCH MADE SEVERAL NEW PROPOSALS TO PROHIBIT USE OF INCENDIARIES TO ATTACK CITIES, AS SUCH, AND TO PROHIBIT USE OF NAPALM EXCEPT FOR CLOSE AIR SUPPORT AND A NUMBER OF OTHER SITUATIONS. THESE ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER DISCUSSION AMONG WESTERN DELS AND WILL NEED CAREFUL STUDY PRIOR TO DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE.

3. MOST IMPORTANT NEW ELEMENT IN THE DISUCSSION WAS CHANGED POSITION OF USSR EXPERTS, WHO, WHILE NOTING THAT INCENDIARY WEAPONS WERE ESSENTIAL, EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO JOIN IN PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ONUSE OF NAPALM.

4. SOVIET REP (BLISHENKO) TOLD ALDRICH PRIVATELY THAT THEIR POSITION DEPENDED VERY MUCH ON OURS AND THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO PROHIBIT USE OF NAPALM IF WE WERE. ALDRICH REPLIED THAT WE WERE NOT, RPT NOT, PREPARED TO DO SO. HOWEVER, WHEN GOADED IN WORKING GROUP MEETING BY FRG REP, WHO SUGGESTED REGIONAL NAPALM-FREE ZONES (CLEARLY IMPLYING REGIONS OTHER THAN EUROPE), BLISHENKO STATED THAT USSR COULD JOIN IN PROHIBITION OF USE OF NAPALM ON REGIONAL BASIS IF ALL OTHER SIGNATORIES AT HELSINKI DECLARATION WOULD DO LIKEWISE. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS EXCHANGE, BLISHENKO SOUGHT OUT ALDRICH FOR FURTHER PRIVATE DISCUSSION TO URGE THAT WE COORDINATE OUR POSITIONS, SAYING THAT HE THOUGHT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO AGREE TO JOINT POSITION WHICH WOUOD INCLUDE SOME RESTRICTIONS (PERHAPS LIMITED) ON USE OF NAPALM. ALDRICH REPLIED THAT WE SHOULD RETURN TO THIS SUBJECT AT BEGINNING OF GENEVA DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON APRIL 21, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WE COULDHAVE POSITIONS THAT WERE AT LEAST NOT OPPOSED.

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5. IT IS STILL PREMATURE TO TAKE ANY FINAL DECISIONS, BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT WE SHALL WANT TO DEVOTE CONSIDERABLE EFFORT IN NEAR FUTURE TO CREATING AS MUCH OF A COMMON FRONT AS POSSIBLE WITH BOTH WESTERN ALLIES AND SOVIETS.

6. WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 9 SHOULD BE CONSIDERABLY EASIER, AS UK PAPER ON LAND MINES SEEMS GENERALLY

ACCEPTABLE TO ALL EXPERTS AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION.FINA

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